

## Board 1 head OKs guidance office plan

By A. STANLEY ALLISON

Thomas LaManna, chairman of Community Board 1, last night wholeheartedly endorsed a proposal to operate a Port Richmond office that would provide counseling services to former adult residents of the Staten Island Developmental Center.

"The program is important to the people they serve and it's important to the community as a whole," LaManna told approximately 40 persons at the board's Port Richmond area committee meeting in the Port Richmond Catholic Youth Organization center.

The office, which may open "in a couple of months," according to Elin Howe, director of the Willowbrook facility, would serve "no more than 30 former residents on any given day," Ms. Howe said, "and they all wouldn't be there at the same time. They would be spread out during the course of the day."

The proposed site is located at 100 Park Ave. and is a former computer center, which "doesn't need a lot of renovations," Ms. Howe said.

Approximately 17 state employees would work in the building, according to John Lamendella, administrator of the institution's Borough Development Services Office, which the facility will be named. Lamendella's office will be in the building.

Social workers and coordinators in the office will provide the former center residents with counselling, Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m., Lamendella said.

"I don't want you to have the misconception that these people are severely retarded," Lamendella said. "They are travel-trained, high-functioning types of clients. Those that have to be escorted will come with their parents. Upon leaving the building they will be going back to their programs or their homes."

"This program is much smaller in scope than we had planned for the former Garber Brothers building," Ms. Howe said.

Lamendella proposed establishing an advisory board, made up of state workers, community residents and representatives of the community board to handle any complaints there might be with the office operations.

Residents at the meeting expressed concern with loitering by the clients and wanted to know what security measures would be employed at the site.

"We would provide any security measures we would have to," Lamendella said, "but at this point, we don't anticipate a need for security."

Only North Shore residents would be served at the site, Lamendella said.

"Most of them have their own jobs and are involved in the community," he said. They're taxpayers."

The Staten Island Developmental Center had sought space in Port Richmond for offices and workshops, but community residents and the board opposed the proposal. The site proposed would house only the offices from that original notion.

The building will be leased by the state, Ms. Howe said, but she was not able to say at what cost, or under what terms the state would do so.

"If problems do arise, we'll have to address ourselves to them," Lamendella said. "We'll be glad to sit down with any group for a better understanding of the program."

"Traditionally, people on the North Shore have opened their doors to these types of programs," LaManna said. "I'm sure in this case they'll do the same."

Charles Molloy, chairman of the area committee, said he would present a recommendation to the community board at its meeting March 13 in St. Roch's School, Port Richmond.